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AMERICAN MANNERS IN 1833.

Translated from a German work by a Correspondent of the Athenæum.

BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

Broadway, the principal street in New York, is one of the noblest in the world. It is always thronged with carriages—but the equipages are not so brilliant as the European; the coachmen and footmen are invariably blacks, and the whole concern is merely hired; for not a creature has carriage and horses of his own, excepting those who keep them to let out on hire. The liveliest part of this street is the middle. The beginning of it is formed by the neat but not spacious dwellings of the oldest wealthy families. Those who have enriched themselves in later times, and these are almost exclusively native Americans, were therefore obliged to build their magnificent habitations in the third mile of the street. Here they stand, at first intermixed with wretched houses, then with sheds and huts, and, finally, quite detached, and further apart, scattered among heaps of rubbish, on vacant spots that have never been levelled. A mile in advance are the streets to be occupied by future generations, scarcely indicated on the wild, uneven, rocky soil, upon which here and there a crippled forest-tree owes its existence to the victory of indolence over the love of gain.

The shops and the throng of people next claim our attention. The Parisians, it is well known, are masters in the art of tastefully decorating their *magazines*, as they pompously style the most petty shops—of setting off their goods to the best advantage, and displaying them in the most striking and attractive manner: in this accomplishment, the people of New York are not a whit behind them; and when you see the troops of dressy ladies and officious gentlemen parading the streets and pouring into the shops, you have not the least doubt that a great deal of business must be done; but I was soon convinced of the contrary. All the shops which I entered were full of ladies; the master, as well as the shopmen, was busily engaged in taking down parcels of goods, opening and tying them up again. Each lady wished to see everything, to learn the price of everything, when it arrived, by what ship, from what place, and the like. It is amusing to see the fair querists tumbling over the silks and ribbons with their delicate hands, unrolling everything, asking a thousand questions whilst examining the quality; at last laying the stuffs in folds, the ribbons in bows, forming the most elegant draperies, nay, extemporizing whole tableaux with astonishing celerity. When this is over, they leave the shop, promising to call again, and go into the next to repeat the same game, which is kept up from eight in the morning till two in the afternoon. At that hour every body goes to dinner; they eat much and quick, then rest for an hour, and by half-past four the Broadway is again in full bloom.

In spite of the good example, I could not help buying, whenever I went into a shop, some trifle or other, for which, of course, as a foreigner, I was obliged to pay double price; but the lesson which I learned at the same time, amply indemnified me. For the first thing I bought I was asked one dollar and fifty cents. I laid a bank note of two dollars on the counter. The shopkeeper immediately put it into his till, and went to attend to something else. When I reminded him that he had not given me the change, he coolly asked whether I was sure that I had paid him. I was speechless at this impudence, when a gentleman interfered, and said with a French accent, "The lady has paid—for I saw her." Upon this the shopkeeper, without betraying the least embarrassment, gave me back twenty cents; I told him that he ought to have given me fifty. He reckoned for some time, and then handed me six more cents. Hoping to shame him out of it, I requested him to lend me the slate, and wrote down for him the little account. He immediately rubbed out what I had written, made figures for a couple of minutes, and gave me a few more cents, saying, "Now it is quite right." It was not right by a great deal; but, being disgusted, I turned away, made an obeisance of acknowledgment to my unknown protector, and was preparing

to leave the shop, when he addressed me. "I see," said he, in French, "that you are a stranger. Permit me to inform you, that in this country a person never pays even the smallest trifle, without taking a bill and receipt in one hand, while he pays the money with the other: and even then it is highly advisable to have at least one witness to the transaction. Whoever has no time to lose provides himself with change, so that he can pay the exact sum; for it is a principle with the people here to make a profit by everything, and of course by giving change." I thanked him for the hint.

The pedestrians in the Broadway confine their perambulations to its west side: it is not the fashion, and it would be considered vulgar to walk on the other. Still the carriage-way is crossed here and there by broad stripes paved with large flag stones, like the foot pavement, to keep up the communication. In crossing these stripes, the drivers of carriages are expected to be very cautious. The most urgent business would not induce an American to shorten his way by crossing the street at any other place, that, should he suffer any injury from a carriage, he may have a right to claim compensation from the owner. The precipitate crossing of the street, therefore, indicates the foreigner. Independently of this voluntary regulation of street police, the stranger, on his part, immediately discovers the genuine American among the streaming masses. A long, pale face, that appears to be stuffed out on one side by a quid of tobacco; lips embrowned by the same herb, deep-seated, large, light, gray eyes; a thoughtful brow, furrowed by the incessant arithmetical exertions of the brain; a decent, but negligent dress. Such is the picture of the native American.

The American, when sitting, may be distinguished at the slightest glance from the native of any other country in the world. If you see a pair of legs stuck up against a window, they belong to some American dandy, who sits rocking himself upon his chair, smoking a cigar or chewing tobacco, and is employed, to a certainty, in trimming his nails with a pen-knife. If you pass coffee-houses, hotels, pastry-cooks, taverns, and such like places, the street is full of chairs on which loll human bodies, while the legs belonging to them are shored against the wall, or against the pillars that support the awning, spread over the whole breadth of the pavement in front of houses of that kind. From the windows beneath the awning dangle as many boots and shoes as can find room at them. Such feet as cannot here find a point of support, usurp the back of a chair that is already occupied, and completely bar the way. At such places the tobacco juice is squirted about like a fire of rockets.

Among the fair sex may be seen many extremely interesting, but mostly pale faces. The stature is noble, the contours charming; but a fine bosom, and the fresh colours of youth and health are universally wanting. The costume is Parisian, but highly exaggerated, and the most amiable creatures run about like maniacs. In their toilette they are extremely economical. At the end of April the fashions are fixed for the year. Every one then procures a dress and a dress bonnet, in the form of which only regard is paid to the fashion, and which is in general made of some cheap stuff. The low prices result from the bad quality of the foreign goods, made up expressly for this market; and hence, rich and poor, white and black, are all dressed alike. You see nothing but *elegant* people; and as in both sexes one imitates another, and all have the greatest resemblance to each other in character, it may be asserted with truth, that whoever has seen and heard one American, has seen and heard all.

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AN AMERICAN HOTEL.

He invited us in; it was the landlord himself, and to our great joy, we found ourselves in the Hotel de Commerce. Under such circumstances, we could not be particular about price; still my husband did not omit to settle that point before-hand, a precaution which, in America, ought never to be neglected. It was agreed, that for board (without drink) and lodging we should pay one dollar a day per head, without distinction of age; and we were then conducted up handsomely carpeted stairs, to a

spacious apartment, also covered with a magnificent carpet. It was soon evident that carpets constituted the principal luxury.

No sooner had we retired to rest, and closed our weary eyes, than we were roused by a fresh alarm. Gleaner opened the window. Gracious heaven! what a tumult! fire-engines, with their endless water-pipes, drawn by hundreds of sturdy Americans—the lights of numberless torches—the clang of trumpets—the shouts of people—all failed to waken a creature in the house; the neighbours, also, were quiet; so we, too, would have gone to sleep again, but, on opening the windows, such a host of gnats, three times as large as those of Europe, had penetrated into the room, that we could scarcely breathe.—They tormented us horribly, and next morning we were all lamentably stung. The sufferings to which we were thus exposed, rendered us indifferent to what was passing abroad; so that in this first painful night we could hear a third alarm of fire with truly American phlegm, without being tempted to open the window again. On the other hand, we waited impatiently for the first dawn of light, in hopes that our nocturnal persecutors would then allow us some rest. This they actually did, probably needing it themselves, for they must have been weary with the work which they had done upon us.

We went down to the breakfast-room, where we found the long table covered with a variety of hot and cold meats and fish, and surrounded by about thirty guests.—Each helped himself to what stood before him. One began with salad, then eggs, and then he took a slice of roast beef, washing it down with coffee, and following that up with cold fish; while his neighbour reversed the order. Before we could recover from the astonishment, everything in the shape of eatables was consumed. So much the more was I surprised to hear calls from all sides for forks, the use of which I could not divine; as I had already seen that the American has no need of them for eating, but uses his knife alone, with wonderful dexterity. A waiter brought several plates full of forks, and set them in the middle of the table. The gentlemen—what signification these genuine republicans attach to this term, I really do not yet know—immediately fell upon the forks; each secured one, rose, and repaired to some part of the room where he could support his feet against the wall. Some even put their legs upon the table, and in this posture began at their ease to pick their teeth and pare their nails. When this operation was finished, each drew from his waistcoat pocket a bit of tobacco prepared for chewing, shoved it with his finger high up beneath the cheek, and hurried away to business.

Our host now came to us. "If," said he, "you would not rise from the table hungry, you must fall to immediately. I have frequently the most distinguished gentlemen in the country, with their whole families, at my table, but the meal never lasts longer than ten minutes.—But let me ask," proceeded our comforter, "have you not slept with your windows open?" I was just bursting forth into bitter complaints of the past night, when the landlord resumed with a smile—"it is a pity that the mosquitoes should have used you so ill the very first night; but they will let you alone the sooner; you cannot get rid of the persecution of these insects till they have had the last drop of European blood out of you. In two years, not a mosquito will touch you any more than a native American." "Aha!" cried Gleaner, rather peevishly, "so then a foreigner must part with everything, even with his blood!" "Just so," replied our host, dryly, and a foreboding shudder came over me.

ON THE BEST BOOKS FOR ATTAINING A CORRECT KNOWLEDGE OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE.

In compliance with the request of our correspondent, J. C. Y., we subjoin a list of a few elementary books; the first on our list we would especially recommend as decidedly the best book for a learner:

Owen Connellan's Gospel, according to St. John, in Irish, with an interlined English translation, a Grammatical

Praxis, and an appendix of Familiar Conversations, which may be had of Tins, Dublin; Hamilton and Adams, Paternoster-row, London: Thady Connellan's English Primer, Guide to the Irish Language, Irish and English Spelling Book, Irish Grammar, Irish English Dictionary, English Irish Dictionary, and his other elementary books, published by Walls, Temple-bar; Hatchard, Rivingtons, &c., London. The best grammars are—Dr. Neilson's of Belfast, and that published by John Barlow, of Dublin, in 1808; the latter a very learned and able work, by the late Mr. Halliday, who was certainly one of the best Irish scholars of modern times. This work, we fear, is out of print: *The Common Prayer*, in English and Irish, of which there are many editions; Watts, London; Grierson, Dublin; &c.—the last the best: *The New Testament*, Watts, London; Grierson, Dublin; and the Bible Societies: *The Holy Bible*, do. do.: The first volume of Keating's History of Ireland, by the late William Halliday, in opposite pages, Irish and English. There is no good English-Irish Dictionary; the Irish-English Dictionaries—O'Brien's, of which a new edition has lately been published, consisting chiefly of the words in the Sacred Scriptures—O'Reilly's, which is a much more extended and useful work: Armstrong's Scottish-Gaelic Dictionary contains both English and Gaelic, and Gaelic and English; and as the Gaelic and Irish are but dialects of the same tongue, with very slight and almost imperceptible variations, this book is a most useful assistant to the Irish scholar: The magnificent Gaelic Dictionary, published by the Highland Society of Scotland, is a very learned and elaborate work, but for all useful purposes we consider Armstrong's sufficient.

We rejoice to find the Irish language exciting curiosity in England; to the grammarian and lexicographer it will afford a valuable mine of etymological wealth, and will supply the radicals for many words which have baffled enquiry hitherto in the most ancient as well as the modern languages of Europe; also the meaning of numerous names of the prominent geographical features of Europe—the promontories, estuaries, rivers, mountains, cities, &c. Indeed, we cannot do better than refer to the volume by Sir W. Betham, which we noticed in our 124th number, for proof of this assertion, where the reader will find many names collated and explained in a manner which clearly and satisfactorily demonstrates them to be *Irish*. That the similarity could have been the effect of chance, appears to us not only improbable but altogether impossible. Sir William Betham maintains, and to our mind has most satisfactorily proved, that the ancient Irish were a colony of Phenicians; the names, therefore, were *Phenician*, and should not in fact be called *Irish*, as they were mostly given before the Phenicians settled in Ireland.

ANECDOTE OF FREDERICK THE GREAT, KING OF PRUSSIA.

Frederick the Great had heard that a corporal in his regiment of body-guards, who was well known as a remarkably handsome and brave young man, wore out of vanity a watch chain, suspended from a leaden bullet in his fob. The king had the curiosity to enquire into the circumstance himself; and an opportunity was contrived that he should meet the corporal as by chance.

"Apropos, corporal," said the king, "you are a brave fellow, and prudent too, to have spared enough from your pay to buy yourself a watch."

"Sire," replied the soldier, "I flatter myself that I am brave; but as to my watch, it is of little signification."

The king, pulling out a gold watch, set with diamonds, said, "By my watch it is five—what o'clock are you, pray?"

The corporal, pulling out his bullet with a trembling hand replied—"My watch neither tells me five nor six, but shows me clearly the death I am to die in your Majesty's service."

"Well, then," returned the king, "that you may likewise see the hour among the twelve, in which you are to die in my service, I will give you mine."